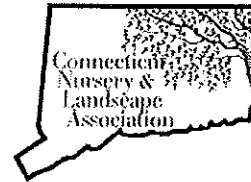


Testimony of Kevin Sullivan
President
Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Association
House Bill 5139
February 21, 2014



Senator Osten, Representative Rojas and Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

I am Kevin Sullivan, owner and operator of Chestnut Hill Nursery in Stafford Springs, Connecticut. I also serve as president of the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association. The CNLA is the state trade association that represents Connecticut's nurseries, garden centers, landscapers, nursery and perennial growers and landscape designers. We are members of the Working Lands Alliance coalition.

I would like to offer my personal views on House Bill 5139, *An Act Concerning the Use of State Funds for the Installation of Solar Panels on Prime Farmland*.

The legislation would prohibit the Clean Energy Fund or the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority from funding solar panels or any photovoltaic energy system that would be installed on prime farmland as defined by the USDA..

I think this is a bill that is assigning a solution before a problem has been identified.

Frankly, why would it be bad if a farm operation utilizes solar?

The nursery and greenhouse sector in Connecticut owns about 23,000 acres, yet, about 8,000 acres are in production. There is ample land to produce our products.

The Governor's Council for Agricultural Development has been discussing energy at length. We all know energy is very expensive in Connecticut. It is a major expense for farms and nurseries.

It would be counter productive to restrict state programs that could help the private agricultural land owner modify or adjust the cost of energy.

I'm a member of the Governor's Council, and we have discussed this very issue. There has been a strong sentiment that restricting state monies for renewable energy on any type of agricultural land is just not sound economic policy.

I urge you not to send this bill forward.

Thank you.